Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A system for providing recorded announcements on a communications network comprising:

at least one central terminal for routing communications on the communication network and in communication with the network, the at least one central terminal further comprising an announcement digital signal processor in communication with the incoming call, wherein the announcement digital signal processor converts one or more digital packet files to voice signals; ~~and~~

an announcement service node coupled to the at least one central terminal further comprising a data schema and an application server for accessing the data schema, wherein the announcement service node provides access via subscription to an inventory of recorded announcement digital packet files on a per-use basis,

wherein the application server is accessible by more than one central terminal coupled to the communications network,

wherein said data schema comprises a storage mass for storing [[a]] the plurality of recorded announcement digital packet files, the plurality of recorded announcement digital packet files including ~~that include~~ information for callers on the communications network, and

wherein a call from an individual is connected to the announcement digital signal processor at the at least one central terminal, with the announcement digital signal processor receiving an announcement digital packet file from the announcement service node while the call from the individual is connected to the at least one central terminal and converting the announcement digital packet file to a voice file so as to audibly convey information to the calling individual as the recorded announcement is played from the at least one central terminal during the call; and

an SS7 network, wherein the at least one central terminal initiates queries to the announcement service node via the SS7 network.

2. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein said storage mass comprises a relational database.

3.   (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said stored recording announcements are in the form of Lightweight Directory Access Protocol.

4.   (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 1 [[4]], wherein said central terminal comprises a central office of a telephone service network.

6.   (Original) A system according to claim 5, wherein said central office initiates queries to said announcement service node in X.25 protocol.

7.   (Original) A system according to claim 1, comprising a plurality of central offices of a telephone service provider coupled to the service node of the telephone service provider.

8-24.   (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method of providing recorded announcements to devices on a network for a telephone service provider comprising the steps of:

coupling a request for a recorded announcement from a device on the network of the telephone service provider to a centralized announcement service node via at least one central terminal, the recorded announcement including information for users who place calls on the network;

coupling a plurality of queries for recorded announcements to the centralized announcement service node via an SS7 network;

retrieving, in response to a request for an announcement from a device, at least one recorded announcement file from a centralized storage mass coupled to the centralized

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announcement service node and the network of said telephone service provider while the device is connected to the caller, wherein the ~~at least one~~ centralized announcement service node and its coupled centralized storage mass is separated from the at least one central terminal, and wherein the announcement service node provides access via subscription to an inventory of recorded announcement files on a per-use basis;

digitally compressing at least one recorded announcement in response to the coupled request;

providing at least one digitally compressed recorded announcement to a device on the service provider's network in response to the coupled request while the device is connected to a caller;

converting at least one digitally compressed recorded announcement to at least one voice file via an announcement digital signal processor;

identifying a user of said network based on a communication from the user's device on the network;

retrieving at least one recorded announcement for the user based in part on the identification of said user; and

playing at least one voice file from the announcement digital signal processor to a user who has placed a call to the network to thereby audibly convey information to the user during the call.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A method of providing recorded announcements to devices on a network according to claim 25 ~~26~~, comprising the step of:

identifying the user based on Dialed Number Identification Service (DNIS).

28. (Currently Amended) A method of providing recorded announcements to devices on a network according to claim 25 ~~26~~, comprising the step of:

identifying the user based on a code dialed by said user.

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29. (Currently Amended) A method of providing recorded announcements to devices on a network according to claim 25 ~~26~~, comprising the step of:

      identifying the user based on Automatic Number Identification (ANI).

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) A method of providing recorded announcements to devices on a network according to claim 25 ~~26~~, comprising the steps of:

      adding a recorded announcement to said centralized storage mass; and

      providing a translation to a switch on the network correlating to the added recorded announcement.

32. (Currently Amended) A method of providing recorded announcements to devices on a network according to claim 25 ~~26~~, comprising the steps of:

      prioritizing a plurality of queries for recorded announcements from one or more central offices on the network; and

      providing a plurality of recorded announcements to said one or more central offices on the network.

33.   (Canceled)